

**Lisa Cataldi**

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**From:** Mehemoood Qureshi <mehemoood1@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 28, 2021 1:40 PM  
**To:** House Health and Human Services Committee  
**Subject:** H. 6396 Concerns

To whom it may concern,

The proposed Flavored Tobacco Ban will not aid in the prevention of youths attaining tobacco products, but rather the opposite effect. The demand for the products will continue to soar in value, moving towards the black market and illegal street sales. This will not only hurt the state and my small business but Rhode Island's ability to deal with this issue as it steers further away from control. It will also open the opportunity for underage children to procure tobacco products as someone who's already selling cigarettes/cigars illegally isn't likely to Card an individual.

The thousands of small, family-owned businesses, like my own, that act as gatekeepers to prevent the youth in our communities from going down this addictive path will be decommissioned and badly injured.

Since the Massachusetts ban, we've seen an influx of people purchasing menthol cigarettes in bulk here in Rhode Island, further proving that although the supply of menthol cigarettes has waned, the demand is still fully there. A ban like this would only serve to hurt Rhode Island's ability to gain taxes from cigarettes, incentivizing our residents to take the 30-minute drive to a neighboring state, and damaging small businesses. I humbly ask you reconsider H. 6396.

Sincerely,  
Mehemoood Qureshi